

## THE IMPACT INITIATIVE

For International Development Research



Bangladesh, Satkhira District  
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# Strengthening networks and building relationships to increase the impact of global development research

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# THE IMPACT INITIATIVE

## For International Development Research

The Impact Lab presents a series of Learning Guides which draw on the lessons for successful impact from grants funded by the ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research. The Joint Fund aims to enhance the quality and impact of social science research, with the goal of reducing poverty amongst the poorest countries and peoples of the world. Since 2005, the Joint Fund has enabled over 150 research projects.

An impact evaluation, undertaken in 2015, assesses the impact of the first two phases of the Joint Fund, and provides a thorough assessment of impact on policymakers, and other stakeholders over the ten years since it began. The evaluation, published in 2016, identifies critical barriers to engagement and uptake in areas like networks and relationships, mutual learning, individual capacities and incentives and lack of demand for evidence. Drawing on the ESRC's conceptual framework for impact assessment to inform the evaluation methodology, the evaluation also recognises the complexities of the research to policy process and the multifaceted nature of social science impact.

The Impact Lab seeks to strengthen links and create dialogue by providing an outline of relevant issues and clear lessons for knowledge practitioners, funders and researchers. Each Learning Guide, therefore, identifies replicable approaches to effective engagement in a particular area previously identified by the impact evaluation as a potential barrier for impact. Drawing on diverse case studies from the first two phases of the Joint Fund, this learning guide shares the strategies that have been successfully employed by ESRC DFID grant holders to increase outreach and maximise research uptake and impact in these critical areas. Many of these approaches may require a better understanding of local conditions, more time, effort or funding. However, the results could significantly strengthen the efficacy of research projects' pathways to impact.

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# Introduction

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Development research can contribute to improvements in policy and practice, research capacity and evidence-based policymaking processes. Achieving these kinds of impacts is most often a complex, multifaceted, political and contested process that, ultimately, depends on changing the attitudes and behaviours of key actors. Strengthening the linkages between research and policy depends on the development of strong relationships between networks of stakeholders that will be able to directly effect change or influence those who are in a position to do so.

This Learning Guide seeks to draw out some of the key lessons from the impact evaluation<sup>1</sup> on successful approaches to developing and maintaining effective relationships and strong networks for impact.

This Learning Guide draws on lessons from four grants funded by the ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research programme<sup>1</sup> to identify and share some common learning themes.

- **Poverty and maternal health in Ghana: a spatial analysis of exclusion from care<sup>3</sup>** (2008–11, Principal Investigator: Professor Zoe Matthews, University of Southampton). Despite maternal health being high on the agenda of the government and international community, Ghana was struggling to make progress on improving maternal health under Millennium Development Goal 5. This project used existing geodata to spatially analyse the relationship between poverty and poorly utilised maternal health services in Ghana, and intended to inform the government, funders, development agencies, and civil society of issues associated with accessing maternal health care and where services and interventions should be targeted to improve maternal health. It was a collaboration between Northern and Southern-based researchers; government analysts; local and international civil society and non-governmental organisations (NGOs) working in the fields of demography, health and geography.
- **Biomedical and health experimentation in South Asia: critical perspectives on collaboration, governance and competition<sup>4</sup>** (2010–13, Principal Investigator: Professor Roger Jeffery, University of Edinburgh). This project explored clinical and public health trials in India, Nepal and Sri Lanka to examine their impact on public health programmes and to inform the better governance and management of trials in the three countries. The research team, from the Universities of Edinburgh and Durham, Colombo Medical School, Social Science Baha and the Anusandhan Trust, mapped experimental activities in the countries and conducted interviews with practitioners, policymakers and patient advocacy groups.



- **Widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania: developing an equity scorecard<sup>5</sup>** (2006–10, Principal Investigator: Professor Louise Morley, University of Sussex). This research sought to provide policymakers, higher education managers and community organisations in Ghana and Tanzania with evidence on how to widen representation from wider social constituencies, in particular women and girls, and those with disabilities, and to contribute to poverty alleviation. An additional aim of the project was research capacity building through the provision of research training for those involved, and the research team was deliberately assembled as a balanced mix of early-, mid- and late-career international researchers. The team reviewed relevant policy frameworks and assessed the implementation of these policies at two universities – one public and one private – in each country. They collected and examined statistical data on participation, retention and achievement rates of students in higher education and presented this as ‘Equity Scorecards’, providing a snapshot of what was happening on particular issues such as gender and disability.
- **What development interventions work? The long-term impact and cost-effectiveness of anti-poverty interventions in Bangladesh<sup>6</sup>** (2008–10, Principal Investigator: Agnes Quisumbing, International Food Policy Research Institute – IFPRI). This project sought to estimate the long-term impact of three anti-poverty interventions in Bangladesh – microfinance, agricultural technologies, and educational transfers – in order to inform the design of future programmes and stimulate debate more broadly. The team combined quantitative analysis of household data in rural Bangladesh with focus group discussions, life histories, interviews and a literature review to examine the impact of the interventions on wellbeing and to compare their cost-effectiveness in attaining poverty-reduction and other development objectives. The target beneficiaries for this research were government ministries and agencies in Bangladesh, international donors and NGOs in the country, academics and, ultimately, poor households (particularly women and children) in Bangladesh and other South Asian countries.

By reviewing these four grants’ impact case studies from the impact evaluation<sup>1</sup>, and conducting short interviews with some of the key researchers involved, we have identified a number of replicable steps that researchers can take to strengthen networks and relationships that will help improve the impact of their research. We also identified some recommendations for research funders. These are set out in the next section, along with practical examples from the four grants.

## 1

### **Review the quality of the relationships between you, your partners and the key stakeholders in your grant as a part of your planning**

More engaged research that is designed with an understanding of how change happens in a particular context, and that maps your desired changes and pathways to these, is more likely to have an impact than a purely supply-driven model of academic study.

Stakeholder mapping and evaluative tools and methodologies such as Participatory Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA), outcome mapping and Net-Map can help to identify priority stakeholders that can contribute the most to achieving impact, and can also highlight gaps in your existing networks that will need to be addressed.

Further information:

- Impact Pathways Analysis (PIPA):  
<http://steps-centre.org/methods/pathways-methods/vignettes/pipa/>
- Net-Map:  
<https://netmap.wordpress.com/>

## Engage the same stakeholders persistently over the course of the research

Structuring engagement with stakeholders – being clear about their role and involving them in a process of engaged, co-constructed scholarship throughout the lifecycle of a grant – often results in more meaningful and sustained networks.

**Example:** [Poverty and maternal health in Ghana: a spatial analysis of exclusion from care<sup>3</sup>](#)

*The 'Poverty and maternal health in Ghana' grant followed a variety of pathways to impact through engaging different types of stakeholders. Their impact case study reports that 'rather than building on smaller impacts throughout the term of the project, the end-users were targeted from the beginning to achieve the desired impacts when the findings were disseminated'. Government stakeholders were engaged at every opportunity, to the extent that government statisticians were asked to help with the data analysis for the grant, ensuring that at least some government departments knew the research was being undertaken and were therefore more receptive to engaging with the dissemination and use of research findings.*

**Where relationships are weak or non-existent develop specific strategies to address this by involving stakeholders as directly as possible in all aspects of the grant**

Key stakeholders can engage usefully with your research grant in a variety of ways. Involving them directly in research activities, in the co-production of academic papers, for example, is an obvious way to build relationships and encourage buy-in – both individually and at an organisational level – with the research findings.

However, this direct involvement in the research process will not be appropriate for all of the stakeholders you need to engage with, so finding other roles for them, and considering how these might help to develop relationships, is a useful strategy.



Ugandan man on a bike  
Photo: Cilia Schubert/Flickr licensed under CC BY-NC 2.0

**Example: [Biomedical and health experimentation in South Asia: critical perspectives on collaboration, governance and competition](#)<sup>4</sup>**

*The 'Biomedical and health experimentation in South Asia' grant used their formal engagement with the Nepal Health Research Council (NHRC), seeking ethical approval for the research grant, as an opportunity to engage with staff and build relationships around the co-design of the research. This led to regular informal meetings and occasional workshops on the progress and findings of the research throughout the grant and beyond.*

**Example: Widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania:  
developing an equity scorecard<sup>5</sup>**

*The 'Widening participation' grant used advisory groups to bring on-board and build relationships with key stakeholders who could help to ensure that research was relevant to target stakeholders, support the dissemination of research findings themselves, and also take on an 'ambassadorial' role utilising their own relationships with wider stakeholder groups.*

*'The advisory groups were seen as important not just to get buy-in but also because of their capital and their networks. Group members attended meetings but also conducted particular assignments so they were active members of a group.'*

*Professor Louise Morley, University of Sussex,  
Principle Investigator.*



## Consider demand and address the wider incentives for key stakeholders to engage with you

Ultimately, good strong relationships exist because they are mutually beneficial so it is worth thinking about what your stakeholders might want from their relationship with you. This more demand-led approach to research can encompass a wide range of factors from better access to policy-relevant information, better opportunities to learn, access to your networks and contacts for their own relationship-building.

### Example: [Poverty and maternal health in Ghana: a spatial analysis of exclusion from care<sup>3</sup>](#)

*The capacity-building activities of the 'Poverty and maternal health in Ghana' grant provided an opportunity to bring together grant researchers and spatial analysts from a partner institution to improve their skills in remote sensing and geographical information systems (GIS). Two members of staff from key academic partners were also funded to undertake a study visit to their UK counterparts, to also further their knowledge of geographic information science. This demonstrated to the stakeholders the wider added value of engaging in the grant and therefore contributed to strengthening relationships overall.*

*The same grant also provided access to up-to-date news and information about maternal and newborn health alongside their own research, thus providing an additional service for stakeholders and an additional reason for them to value their engagement with the grant.*

*Identifying these kinds of opportunities to strengthen relationships clearly requires a good understanding of stakeholders' needs, so conducting some kind of needs assessment, even informally, might be beneficial. The 'Poverty and maternal health in Ghana' grant did not conduct a structured needs assessment but included a discussion on stakeholder needs as part of their planning meetings with partners.*

## Reach out to audiences in their own context

All the grants we looked at used a variety of face-to-face events and meetings – workshops, seminars, trainings, presentations, interviews – at some stage in their research but with varying degrees of emphasis on stakeholder engagement and research collaboration.



Vietnam.  
Photo: Asian Development Bank/Flickr licensed under CC BY-NC-ND 2.0.

### Example: [What development interventions work? The long-term impact and cost-effectiveness of anti-poverty interventions in Bangladesh<sup>6</sup>](#)

*For the 'What development interventions work?' grant in Bangladesh the Co-Investigators consciously built stakeholder engagement through a series of workshops and events to disseminate interim findings targeted to the research and policymaker community. They started with a stakeholder consultation that brought together officials and staff of major NGOs, partners, relevant government ministries, and multilateral and bilateral agencies. Over the course of the grant they continued to invite the same (or similar) set of actors to dissemination workshops and conducted a community dissemination workshop with one of the NGOs whose programmes they had evaluated.*

### Example: [Biomedical and health experimentation in South Asia: critical perspectives on collaboration, governance and competition<sup>4</sup>](#)

*The 'Biomedical and health experimentation in South Asia' grant very much saw the interviews they conducted for their research as a key means in building relationships with stakeholders early in the process and, in their impact case study, highlighted the importance of using these initial connections to feedback research findings and develop dialogue with stakeholders on how they might use those findings.*

## Actively manage relationships – things can change fast

Where strong relationships with stakeholders have already been built the temptation is to assume that these will persist and to focus your efforts on building new relationships elsewhere. This can be risky. High rates of staff turnover and lack of policy continuity were common among the stakeholders in at least two of the grants reviewed.



Picture: David Stanley under license CC BY 2.0

### Example: [What development interventions work? The long-term impact and cost-effectiveness of anti-poverty interventions in Bangladesh<sup>6</sup>](#)

*When it came to conduct an impact case study of the 'What development interventions Work?' grant in Bangladesh, the reviewers found that:*

*'...most of these people [workshop participants] had left their organisations. The only three left in post are academics – none of them are policymakers. None of the people who were involved at the time (in the government...) are the policymakers today.'*

*Agnes Quisumbing, IFPRI, Principal Investigator.*

*Relationships are generally built with individuals, rather than with the organisations they represent so when staff move on this can have damaging consequences that are difficult to mitigate against. Employing strategies that engage more broadly across stakeholder organisations instead of, or in combination with, developing closer individual relationships can help to mitigate this risk, but comes with obvious costs.*

*Both grants found that by investing management time in building quality relationships with partners and stakeholders those relationships persisted and generated positive impacts even when staff moved on to different organisations and roles.*

**Example: [Poverty and maternal health in Ghana: a spatial analysis of exclusion from care](#)<sup>3</sup>**

*The 'Poverty and maternal health in Ghana' grant saw project researchers move into roles where they were able to exert more direct influence on government.*

'One of the Southern-based researchers changed their position from a university lecturer to the government's deputy statistician within the Ghanaian Statistical Service during the project. This led to government workers analysing data and being involved with producing the research findings rather than just being a target audience.'

Professor Zoe Williams, University of Southampton,  
Principal Investigator.

**Example: [What development interventions work? The long-term impact and cost-effectiveness of anti-poverty interventions in Bangladesh](#)<sup>6</sup>**

*In the 'What development interventions work?' grant key research partners have built on the work conducted under the grant to help them move into influential new roles.*

'One of the Co-Investigators of that project now heads IFPRI's Country Office in Bangladesh, where he advises the Ministry of Agriculture (and other agencies) as part of the USAID-funded Policy Research Strategy Support Program.'

Agnes Quisumbing, IFPRI, Principal Investigator.

## 1

### **Create space and time for research grants to build and maintain effective relationships**

Building and managing effective relationships takes time (often longer than the duration of research grants) and requires sufficient allocation of resources. Often in the grants we have looked at, where the value of relationship-building activities was well understood, the teams and their partners felt constrained by the time available. All identified areas where they could have done more if they had created more space in the grant to accommodate the additional effort required.

This was particularly the case in engaging with non-academic audiences, where relationship-building would not naturally occur as part of the research process and therefore required additional activities as part of the grant's wider approach to impact. One Principal Investigator, for the 'Poverty and maternal health in Ghana3' grant, recounted how they sought additional consultancy work outside of the grant to enable them to build a good working relationship with the relevant government ministry as it was difficult to find a means of doing that within the scope of the project.

Follow on funding can be a good means to support additional knowledge exchange initiatives with non-academic audiences. Following a pilot phase (in 2013-2014), ESRC DFID's Impact and Engagement Scheme in 2015 (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-dfid-impact-and-engagement-scheme-2015/>) provided follow on funding to researchers funded within Phase 2 of the Joint Fund. The scheme was designed to enable researchers to respond to emerging opportunities for knowledge exchange and research impact. ESRC also provides Impact Acceleration Accounts (IAA) which are block awards made to research organisations to accelerate the impact of research. The IIA scheme is designed to respond (flexibly and rapidly) to promote knowledge exchange in key areas including: building relationships and networks with potential research users, facilitating the co-production of knowledge, and improving engagement with wider (non-academic) audiences such as the public sector and civil society.

Research funders recognise the need to build strong networks and relationships for impact – ESRC and DFID provide some guidance and support around engagement with stakeholders, including non-academic stakeholders, as part of their ESRC Impact Toolkit2 which has sections on 'public engagement guidance' and 'developing a communications strategy'. Research funders, in general, could perhaps do more along these lines to ensure that grants are realistic about the allocation of time and resources required. Obviously a key indicator of the extent to which grants will need to invest in building relationships



is the extent to which those relationships are already in place, so asking grant holders to be clear about this in the application process might be beneficial too. Applications for ESRC funding require, for example, completion of a Pathways to Impact plan where researchers are asked to include steps for developing knowledge exchange activities. Guidance on developing a good Pathways to Impact plan is also included in the ESRC Impact Toolkit<sup>2</sup>. ESRC DFID also require key stakeholder workshops to take place at the start of grants, and include engagement with stakeholders within assessment criteria.

Research funders could also be supportive of adaptive management of grants. Log frames and strict planning can cause projects to fail to achieve the relative nimbleness needed to exploit emerging engagement opportunities as policy contexts change - ESRC DFID recognise this in their approach with grant holders which allows space for greater flexibility and adaptation. Finally, changes in government, changes in partners, and changes in our understanding of the issues all require adapting our approach to networking and relationship-building.

## 2

### **Make sure grant teams have the right balance of skills and competencies for building strong relationships**

Taking account of the skills profile of proposed research teams when deciding on research grants would seem to be a key part of any funding process, but it is not clear to what extent funders consider the wider set of competencies required for building strong relationships.

This may be worth looking into further – recognising that the kind of networking, management and facilitation skills needed might not be immediately apparent from a standard researcher's CV. ESRC DFID include criteria (for example, in the ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research Grants Call 2014-15) for assessing the balance and collaborative nature of research partnerships (including academic and non-academic partnerships) as well as the roles and responsibilities proposed within the project management.

Research funders should guide grant holders to:

1. ensure a good balance of in-country researchers/partners within the team whose physical presence will help build relationships locally;
2. allocate responsibility (and sufficient time) for overseeing the development and management of relationships, either to the Principal Investigator or to a separate project manager role within the project.

### Think about how you can leverage your own position to support the development of strong networks and relationships

Lastly, it is worth considering how research funders can more directly support the role of strong networks and relationships in delivering impact.

In much the same way as research funders would think about how new research contributes to a wider body of knowledge they should think strategically and holistically about the way in which relationships or networks built up over successive grants, or across a number of similar grants on a particular topic or country, can support and build on each other to enhance impact. DFID ESRC, for example, set up The Impact Initiative to support relationships and networks across grants from their Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research Programme and from the Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Research Programme.

#### Example: What development interventions work? The long-term impact and cost-effectiveness of anti-poverty interventions in Bangladesh<sup>6</sup>

*The 'What development interventions work?' grant in Bangladesh was a small portion of a much wider policy research portfolio in Bangladesh that built on prior work and continues beyond it. Findings from that grant are reflected in continued work in Bangladesh and lessons learnt have been applied to other policies and programmes at much larger scale. Funders assessment of the impact of this project therefore needs to reflect this and see the grant as a contribution to the development of key relationships and networks that will have impact over time – rather than the other way around.*

Research funders are themselves key stakeholders in the research grants they fund and should consider how they can assist grants by providing access to their own networks and facilitating relationship-building. This can be as straightforward as sharing information with grant holders on the other research grants they are engaged with on similar topics and/or in the same countries and providing details of contacts. In addition, having access to research funders can be a good incentive for stakeholders to engage with research grants (see recommendation 4 in the Top tips for researchers). So being supportive and active participants in relevant networks will, in itself, help research teams to build stronger relationships. The UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS) provide a useful guide on Finding and Building Effective Partnerships (<http://www.ukcds.org.uk/resources/finding-and-building-effective-partnerships>) along with a range of resources on relationship building and collaborative working.



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## Targeting interventions to improve maternal health in Ghana

### Poverty and maternal health in Ghana: a spatial analysis of exclusion from care<sup>3</sup>

This project aims to quantify the spatial links between poverty and poor utilisation of maternal health services in Ghana. By investigating factors related to both physical accessibility and availability of health services, the research facilitates an understanding of the effect of poverty on patterns of spatial variation in service use.

## The challenge

In 2008, improving maternal health was a key development priority in the Millennium Development Goals, along with the eradication of poverty. Ghana, a country with a high level of maternal mortality, was falling short of meeting this goal and substantial efforts were being made by government, research funders and NGOs to get back on track by scaling up the provision of maternal health services.

## The solution

The aim of this project was to use existing data sets to investigate the extent to which physical inaccessibility and poor availability of health services was constraining the attainment of both better maternal health and lower infant mortality in the country. The intention was to present both national and local government, research funders and NGOs with detailed maps explaining the reasons for exclusion from care throughout Ghana to help identify where services and interventions should be targeted to improve maternal health.

This project was a collaboration between UK- and Ghanaian-based researchers; government analysts; local and international civil society and non-governmental organisations. The team recognised that to achieve impact at the level of government policy they would require strong relationships and engagement with all of these stakeholders, so set out to build these relationships from the start.

They had a clear understanding of the different levels of stakeholders within the government health offices of Ghana and invested heavily in building relationships at all levels. National, regional and district government health policymakers and health

implementers were frequently and persistently engaged, enabling research findings to be informed by, and made specifically for, regional and district-level policymakers – increasing impact.

These close relationships also meant that members of the project team were invited to conferences and events in Ghana to discuss the ongoing work and to generate interest in the research findings.

In addition to government policy actors, close relationships were also built with civil society, advocacy, and non-governmental organisations. Many of these recognised that the research would directly benefit their own efforts to raise the awareness of maternal health issues in Ghana, so contributed directly to the research grant as partners.

## **The outcome**

The grant had a number of both direct and capacity-building impacts on the provision of maternal health services in Ghana and beyond. It strengthened relationships between academic, government, and civil society bodies working on maternal and newborn child health. These relationships are still ongoing and have continued through different funding sources and projects. The analysis methods and data sets as well as the research findings themselves are still being utilised and built upon by the partners in new projects. The best example of this is the Evidence for Action (E4A) multi-country programme (<http://www.evidence4action.net/>). It also led to some members of the research team working with the United Nations Population Fund (UNPF) (<http://www.unfpa.org/>) on the 'High Burden Countries Initiative' (<http://www.who.int/workforcealliance/countries/hbci/en/>) to map human resources for health – an ongoing barrier to improving health in Ghana.

# Conclusion

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For researchers seeking to extend their reach beyond academia and contribute to improvements in the design and delivery of development policy and practice, building strong networks and relationships is essential.

It requires planning and thinking in a different way that sees the research process not simply as a means of generating new knowledge but as an inclusive process which engages with the politics of knowledge, and responds to the needs of key stakeholders – building alliances, generating trust and new broad alliances and supporting the co-development of policy-relevant knowledge that can contribute to addressing development challenges.

## References and key resources

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<sup>1</sup> 2016 Impact evaluation of the Joint Fund: <http://www.theimpactinitiative.net/2016-impact-evaluation-joint-fund>

<sup>2</sup> ESRC What is Impact? <http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/what-is-impact/>

<sup>3</sup> Poverty and maternal health in Ghana: a spatial analysis of exclusion from care (2008–11, Principal Investigator: Professor Zoe Matthews, University of Southampton). <http://www.theimpactinitiative.net/project/poverty-and-maternal-health-ghana-spatial-analysis-exclusion-care>

<sup>4</sup> Biomedical and health experimentation in South Asia: critical perspectives on collaboration, governance and competition (2010–13, Principal Investigator: Professor Roger Jeffery, University of Edinburgh). <http://www.theimpactinitiative.net/project/biomedical-and-health-experimentation-south-asia-critical-perspectives-collaboration>

<sup>5</sup> Widening participation in higher education in Ghana and Tanzania: developing an equity scorecard (2006–10, Principal Investigator: Professor Louise Morley, University of Sussex). <http://www.theimpactinitiative.net/project/widening-participation-higher-education-ghana-and-tanzania-developing-equity-scorecard>

<sup>6</sup> What development interventions work? The long-term impact and cost-effectiveness of anti-poverty interventions in Bangladesh (2008–10, International Food Policy Research Institute – IFPRI). <http://www.theimpactinitiative.net/project/what-development-interventions-work>



# Key resources

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## Research funding and guidance:

- ESRC DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research Programme:  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/international-development/esrc-dfid-joint-fund-for-poverty-alleviation-research/>
- ESRC DFID Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems Research Programme:  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/international-research/international-development/esrc-dfid-raising-learning-outcomes-in-education-systems-research-programme/>
- ESRC Funding - information about funding opportunities and related guidance:  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/>
- ESRC Impact Acceleration Accounts:  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/impact-acceleration-accounts/>
- ESRC Impact Prize:  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/celebrating-impact-prize/>
- ESRC Research Funding Guide – May 2016  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-funding-guide/>

## Tools and guidance for building impact:

- DFID Research Uptake Guidance – published May 2013 (updated April 2016):  
<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/research-uptake-guidance>
- ESRC Developing impact evaluation:  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/research-and-impact-evaluation/developing-impact-evaluation/>
- ESRC DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research - Impact and Engagement scheme 2015  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/funding-opportunities/esrc-dfid-impact-and-engagement-scheme-2015/>
- ESRC Impact Case Studies:  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/news-events-and-publications/impact-case-studies/>
- ESRC Impact Toolkit: provides definitions of impact; guidance and support for maximizing research impact; for 'Developing Your Pathway to Impact' (<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/developing-pathways-to-impact/>); and includes a variety of communications tools for developing effective research communications:  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/>
- ESRC 'Pathways to Impact for Je-S (Joint Electronic Submission System) applications – guidance for applicants:

<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/je-s-electronic-applications/pathways-to-impact-for-je-s-applications/>

- The UK Collaborative on Development Sciences (UKCDS): provide a useful guide on Finding and Building Effective Partnerships (<http://www.ukcds.org.uk/resources/finding-and-building-effective-partnerships>) along with a range of resources on relationship building and collaborative working: <http://www.ukcds.org.uk/resources>

Further resources:

- Evaluating the Impact of the ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research: Final report to ESRC and DFID (March 2016)  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/research/research-and-impact-evaluation/evaluating-the-impact-of-the-esrc-dfid-joint-fund-for-poverty-alleviation-research/>
- Related to this report: The Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research impact evaluation: a response from ESRC and DFID (March 2016):  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/files/research/research-and-impact-evaluation/joint-fund-for-poverty-alleviation-research-impact-evaluation-a-response-from-dfid-and-esrc/>
- Policy, practice and business impacts: evaluation  
<http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/research-and-impact-evaluation/policy-practice-and-business-impacts-evaluation-studies/>

# Glossary of terms

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## **Capacity Building\***

Through technical and personal skill development

## **Co-construction (of knowledge)**

An approach to learning in which the focus is on collaborating with others in order to build a body of knowledge and understanding that is shared by everyone in the group – individuals are actively involved in the process of developing understanding as equal partners.

## **Co-learning**

Collaborative learning in which individuals come together (either as pairs or as a larger group) to capitalize on one another's experience, skills, and perspectives in order to develop a common understanding.

## **Co-production**

Collaborative and reciprocal process by which individuals design, develop and deliver a product (the research, or research outputs such as a publication, event or workshop) through equal partnership.

## **Communication pathways**

A method or strategy that engages those with knowledge and ensures that information is effectively communicated to a wider audience.

## **Communities of Practice (CoP)**

Where individuals interact as a group around a common theme, topic or body of knowledge in order to exchange learning and understanding. Online Communities of Practice can be useful forums of peer

support, particularly when individuals are spread geographically.

## **Conceptual\***

Contributing to the understanding of policy issues, reframing debates

## **Cumulative influence\***

Research impact and influence that emerges over a longer period of time as evidence and debate increases, grows and deepens.

## **Instrumental \***

Influencing the development of policy, practice or service provision, shaping legislation, altering behaviour

## **Knowledge broker**

"A knowledge broker is an intermediary (an organization or a person), that aims to develop relationships and networks with, among, and between producers and users of knowledge by providing linkages, knowledge sources, and in some cases knowledge itself..." (Wikipedia)

## **Knowledge exchange**

Knowledge exchange is a process that brings all stakeholders together (i.e. researchers, research users, policy-makers, and communities) in order to exchange expertise, information, ideas, experience and to learn from learning emerging from research.

## **Knowledge exchange capacity**

Developing the skills and ability to foster knowledge exchange.

## **Knowledge intermediaries**

The knowledge intermediary role is to bring producers and users of knowledge together therefore helping to connect evidence with demand.

## **Mutual learning**

Process of collaborative learning between two or more individuals. A broad definition of mutual learning in a research context would include all stakeholders being engaged in collective learning from research from the outset and continuously throughout in order to benefit the development of the research and support its' medium to longer term impact and sustainability. Mutual learning can also be applied to the communication and dissemination of lessons learnt to a wider audience.

## **Outputs**

Outputs are related more to the immediate results of research in terms of what was produced or undertaken.

## **Outcomes**

Outcomes are the consequences of research in the medium to longer term.

\*These definitions are drawn from the following resources:

- What is impact? The Economic and Social Research Council (ESRC) Toolkit
- Evaluating the Impact of the ESRC-DFID Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research.







# THE IMPACT INITIATIVE

For International Development Research

The Impact Initiative for International Development Research exists to increase the uptake and impact of two programmes of research funded through the ESRC-DFID Strategic Partnership. These are: (i) The Joint Fund for Poverty Alleviation Research, and (ii) The Raising Learning Outcomes in Education Systems programme. The Initiative helps identify synergies between these programmes and their grant holders, and supports them to exploit influencing and engagement opportunities and facilitates mutual learning.

The Impact Initiative is a collaboration between the Institute of Development Studies (IDS) and the University of Cambridge's Research for Equitable Access and Learning (REAL) Centre.

[www.theimpactinitiative.net](http://www.theimpactinitiative.net)

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